Connecticut Sentencing Commission

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 6509

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.

By Hon. Joseph M. Shortall
Chairman, Connecticut Sentencing Commission

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and members of the Judiciary Committee.

I am Joseph Shortall, the Chairman of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. **I am here to testify on behalf of the Commission in support of House Bill 6509,** AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission was created by Public Act 10-129, which was effective February 1, 2011. Its mission, as stated in the statute, is as follows:

"to review the existing criminal sentencing structure in the state and any proposed changes thereto, including existing statutes, proposed criminal justice legislation and existing and proposed sentencing policies and practices and make recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly and appropriate criminal justice agencies."

The commission consists of 23 members, including judges, prosecutors, criminal defense counsel, the commissioners of the Departments of Correction, Public Safety and Mental Health and Addiction Services, the victim advocate, the executive director of the court support services division of the Judicial Branch, a municipal police chief, the chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the undersecretary of the criminal justice policy and planning division of the Office of Policy and Management and members of the public appointed by the Governor and the leaders of the General Assembly.

Public Act 10-129 identifies 13 tasks for the Commission in carrying out its mission, including facilitation of the development of a state-wide sentencing database, evaluation of existing and proposed statutes and programs, identification of potential areas of sentencing disparity and providing training regarding sentencing and related issues.

Honorable Joseph M. Shortall, Chair

Undersecretary Mike Lawlor, Vice Chair

Andrew J. Clark, Acting Executive Director

By amending Public Act 10-129 to add the chairs and ranking members of the Judiciary Committee to the Sentencing Commission's membership, the Commission believes it would benefit from their familiarity with the legislative process and their knowledge of the criminal justice system.

Passage of SB 6509, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION, would assist the Commission's in carrying out its statutory mission.

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